

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 3 December 2021

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 18 to 28 November 2021 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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1 . Main points

Throughout the period of 18 to 28 November 2021, based on adults in Great Britain:

- Over 8 in 10 (84%) adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days, while around 4 in 10 (39%) reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home.
- While most adults reported wearing a face covering often or always while shopping (71%) and the whole time while travelling on public transport (70%) in the past seven days, just 19% and 21% said that everyone or almost everyone was wearing a face covering in the same respective settings.
- Around a third (34%) of adults report having had two coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations and a booster, compared with 24% in the previous period (3 to 14 November 2021).
- The majority of adults (90%) who have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, but not a booster yet, said they would be very likely or fairly likely to have a booster vaccine if offered to them, while 5% said they would be very unlikely or fairly unlikely to have a booster vaccine if offered.
- Fewer than 1 in 10 (7%) adults had been asked to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in the past seven days (excluding for travel abroad), most commonly to attend a theatre or comedy performance (25%), an indoor concert (19%), a nightclub or bar (16%), a work or training event (14%) or a sporting event (11%).
- Over a third (36%) of adults reported experiencing goods shortages in the past two weeks, with approximately 1 in 6 (17%) of all adults unable to buy essential food.
- Around two-thirds (65%) of adults reported their cost of living has increased over the last month, with the most common reasons being an increase in the price of food shopping (87%), an increase in gas or electricity bills (77%) and an increase in the price of fuel (76%).

Estimates included in this release are based on data collected between 18 and 28 November 2021, prior to new measures against the Omicron variant coming into effect.

2 . Social impacts of coronavirus

Face coverings

Most adults (84%) in Great Britain (GB) reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days: 83% in England, 92% in Wales and 97% in Scotland. This proportion appeared to increase with age; 72% of those aged 16 to 29 years, 83% of those aged 30 to 49 years, 89% of those aged 50 to 69 years, and 93% of those aged 70 years and above reported this.

Rules on face coverings vary across [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#). Wearing a face covering was not a legal requirement during this period (18 to 28 November) in most settings in England. New rules on face coverings were introduced in England on 30 November. In Scotland and Wales, wearing a face covering was legally required on public transport and in many indoor settings.

More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- [Explore the latest coronavirus data](#) from the ONS and other sources.
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how we are [working safely in our studies and surveys](#).

Among those who left home to shop in the past seven days, 71% of adults reported wearing a face covering often or always, while around 2 in 10 (19%) reported seeing everyone or almost everyone wearing a face covering when doing so.

Among those who travelled on public transport in the past seven days, 70% of adults reported wearing a face covering for the whole journey, while around a fifth (21%) reported seeing everyone or almost everyone wearing a face covering while doing so.

Among those who had been inside a restaurant, café or bar in the past seven days, just below a quarter (23%) reported often or always wearing a face covering when doing so. At the same time, around 1 in 10 (11%) reported seeing everyone or almost everyone wearing a face covering in these settings.

Over 8 in 10 (85%) adults reported they felt wearing a face covering was important or very important in slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) (84% in the period 3 to 14 November 2021). This proportion increased with age; 76% of those aged 16 to 29 years, 84% of those aged 30 to 49 years, 89% of those aged 50 to 69 years and 93% of those aged 70 years and above reported this.

Social distancing

Around 39% of adults reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days, which was similar to the previous period (41%).

Most adults (87%) reported they felt social distancing was important or very important in slowing the spread of COVID-19 (85% in the previous period).

Physical contact outside and inside the home

More than half of adults (56%) reported they avoided physical contact with others outside their home in the past seven days (58% in the previous period).

When friends and family had come into their home, the most common actions adults reported to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 were:

- washing hands regularly (32%; 33% in the previous period)
- opening windows or doors (21%; 23% in the previous period)
- maintaining social distancing (18%, unchanged from the previous period)
- cleaning touch points (14%, 16% in the previous period)

Around 4 in 10 adults (43%) reported friends and family had not come into their home in the past seven days, similar to the previous period (42%).

Self-isolation

The proportion of adults who reported self-isolating in the past seven days was 4%, up slightly from 3% in the two previous periods (20 to 31 October and 3 to 14 November 2021). The main reasons adults self-isolated were:

- having tested positive for COVID-19 (31%)
- being worried about catching COVID-19 (26%)
- having been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 (25%)

Personal well-being measures

Personal well-being measures in this period were broadly similar to those in the previous period. Life satisfaction and happiness remained unchanged, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile marginally increased and anxiety fell slightly from the previous period. The personal well-being measures for this period were:

- life satisfaction: 7.1, unchanged from the previous period
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile: 7.4, 7.3 in the previous period
- happiness: 7.1, unchanged from the previous period
- anxiety: 3.8, 3.9 in the previous period

Location of work

Among working adults:

- around 7 in 10 (71%) reported travelling to work at some point in the past seven days (67% in the previous period)
- around 3 in 10 (29%) reported working from home at some point in the past seven days (30% in the previous period)
- around one in seven (15%) reported both working from home and travelling to work in the past seven days (14% in the previous period)
- around one-third (33%) reported that compared with before the pandemic, they are more likely to work from home if they have a cold, similar to the previous period (34%)

3 . Vaccinations and lateral flow testing

In this period, we continued to ask adults if they had been required to provide proof of their coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination status, what the likelihood of children living in their household being vaccinated would be, and about their own likelihood of having a COVID-19 booster vaccine or flu vaccine.

We also asked adults about their preferences towards reporting and their confidence in how to report the results of COVID-19 lateral flow tests.

COVID-19 booster vaccine and flu vaccine

COVID-19 booster vaccine

Around a third (34%) of adults report having had two vaccinations and a booster, compared with 24% in the previous period (3 to 14 November 2021). Among adults who have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine but not yet a booster, 9 in 10 (90%) said they would be very likely or fairly likely to have a booster COVID-19 vaccine if offered to them. Meanwhile, 5% said they would be very unlikely or fairly unlikely to have a booster vaccine if offered.

Those in older age groups reported more frequently they were very or fairly likely to have a booster vaccine (96% of 50- to 69-year-olds and 91% of those aged 70 years and over) compared with younger age groups (85% of 16- to 29-year-olds and 89% of 30- to 49-year-olds).

The most common reasons respondents gave for being very or fairly unlikely to have the booster vaccine if offered were:

- thinking the first and second vaccine would be enough to keep them safe (59%)
- thinking the booster vaccine would not offer them any extra protection (49%)
- being worried about long-term effects on their health (33%)
- thinking the booster vaccine should be offered to others instead of themselves (22%)

Of adults who said they were very likely, fairly likely or neither likely nor unlikely to have a flu vaccine and a booster vaccine, 76% reported being very or fairly likely to agree to have them at the same time.

Flu vaccine

Of adults who reported they had not had a flu vaccine this winter, 37% reported being very or fairly likely to have one, while 45% reported being very or fairly unlikely to.

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination

Among adults in Great Britain, 7% had been asked to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination (excluding when travelling abroad) in the past seven days. The most frequently reported settings where adults were asked for proof of vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in order to attend were:

- a theatre or comedy performance (25%)
- an indoor concert (19%)
- a nightclub or bar (16%)
- a work or training event (14%)
- a sporting event (11%)

Guidance on the settings in which proof of vaccination may be required varies across [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).

Vaccination of children aged 12 to 15 years

Of adults with a child aged between 12 and 15 years in their household, around 6 in 10 (58%) said the child had already received a vaccine (41% in the previous period), while just over one in four (27%) reported the child would be very likely or fairly likely to receive a vaccine for COVID-19 (43% in the previous period).

Lateral flow testing

Around 4 in 10 (37%) adults had taken a COVID-19 lateral flow test in the last seven days. Around three-quarters (76%) of all adults were very or fairly confident in how to report the result of a lateral flow test. Around 1 in 10 (8%) reported they were very or fairly unconfident in how to report the result.

When asked how often they report the result of a lateral flow test to the NHS, 31% of all adults said they always report the result, while 25% said they sometimes report the result and almost a quarter (24%) never reported the result. Around one in five (20%) had never taken a lateral flow test.

Of those who had ever taken a lateral flow test, 92% stated they would be very or fairly likely to report a positive result, and fewer than half (47%) said they would be likely or very likely to report a negative result.

4 . Goods shortages

In this period, we continued to ask adults whether they had experienced shortages of any goods at any time in the past two weeks. Fewer than 4 in 10 (36%) adults reported experiencing shortages (41% in the previous period).

Food

Around 1 in 6 (17%) reported they had not been able to buy essential food because it was not available (18% in the previous period).

When food shopping, more than 6 in 10 (64%) reported experiencing some differences compared with the usual. The most commonly reported differences were:

- less variety in the shops (43%)
- items needed were not available, but a replacement was found (20%)
- items needed were not available and a replacement could not be found (20%)
- spending more than usual to get what I normally buy (20%)

Medicine

Around 3 in 10 (27%) adults who had tried to buy medicine or get a prescription reported experiencing some differences compared with the usual, unchanged from the previous period. The most commonly reported differences were:

- having to wait longer for their prescription (13%)
- having to go to more pharmacies to find what they needed (5%)
- items needed were not available, but a replacement could be found (5%)
- items needed were not available and a replacement could not be found (5%)

5 . Household finances and cost of living

In this period, we asked adults about their household finances and cost of living. When asked how the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was affecting their life in the past seven days, 11% of adults said their household finances were being affected.

We also asked adults about changes in their cost of living over the last month, with 65% saying their cost of living had increased (62% in the previous period; 3 to 14 November 2021), while 1% of adults said their cost of living had decreased (same as the previous period).

The most common reasons reported for an increase in the cost of living were:

- an increase in the price of food shopping (87%); 86% in the previous period
- an increase in gas or electricity bills (77%); 78% in the previous period
- an increase in the price of fuel (76%); same as the previous period

It should be noted that there are strong seasonal spending patterns relating to gas and electricity that may affect these results. [Consumer price statistics](#) for October show that electricity and gas prices increased by 8.7% and 17.1% respectively on the month, resulting in 12-month inflation rates of 18.8% for electricity and 28.1% for gas.

When asked about their financial situation around 6 in 10 (61%) adults said they were able to pay an unexpected but necessary expense of £850, the same as the previous period.

Fewer than 2 in 10 (16%) adults said they have had to borrow more money or use more credit than usual in the last month compared with a year ago (18% in the previous period).

Further demographic breakdowns of these estimates are available within the accompanying [datasets](#).

6 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 3 December 2021

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain. Includes breakdowns by age, sex and region.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: Personal experience of shortage of goods](#)

Dataset | Released on 3 December 2021

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on whether people experienced shortage of goods such as food, medicine and fuel when shopping, covering the period 18 to 28 November 2021.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: Household finances](#)

Dataset | Released on 3 December 2021

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the ways in which people report the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their household and personal finances, covering the period 18 to 28 November 2021.

7 . Measuring the data

This release contains data and indicators from a module being undertaken through the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on British society.

Breakdowns by age, sex, region and country, including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain dataset](#).

Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of the differences.

Sampling and weighting

In the period between 18 to 28 November we sampled 4,498 households. These were randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample contained 3,036 individuals, representing a 68% response rate. This sample size is slightly smaller than in previous periods to help ensure the survey remains sustainable.

Survey weights were applied to make estimates representative of the population (based on June 2021 population estimates). Further information on the survey design and quality can be found in the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#).

8 . Related links

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest data and analysis](#)

Web page | Updated as data become available

Latest data and analysis on coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effects on the economy and society.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest insights](#)

Web page | Updated as data become available

An interactive tool to explore the latest data and trends about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and other sources.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) harmonisation guidance](#)

Webpage | Updated frequently

This page provides harmonisation guidance on how best to collect data about the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Users can also find a bank of questions from multiple Office for National Statistics (ONS) surveys related to COVID-19 to be used in other surveys to further support harmonisation and questionnaire development. This bank also provides users with an understanding of what data ONS has in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

[Coronavirus and changing attitudes towards vaccination, England: 7 to 16 September 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 9 November 2021

Changes in uptake and attitudes towards the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines, amongst adults who previously reported vaccine hesitancy.

[Coronavirus and behaviour of the vaccinated population after being in contact with a positive case in England: 25 to 30 October 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 18 November 2021

Behaviour of fully vaccinated individuals not required to self-isolate after being in contact with a positive case of COVID-19, from the COVID Test and Trace Contacts Behavioural Insights Survey. Experimental Statistics.

[Eight in ten adults think social distancing is important – but four in ten actually do it](#)

Article | Released 22 October 2021

Data and analysis on the percentage of adults in Great Britain practicing preventative measures to slow the spread of coronavirus and how important these measures are considered to be.

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 2 December 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 December 2021

Early experimental data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and experimental methods.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey, characteristics of people testing positive for COVID-19, UK: 1 December 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 1 December 2021

Characteristics of people testing positive for COVID-19 from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey. This survey is being delivered in partnership with University of Oxford, University of Manchester, Public Health England and Wellcome Trust. This study is jointly led by the ONS and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) working with the University of Oxford and Lighthouse Laboratories to collect and test samples.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey: antibody and vaccination data, UK: 23 November 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 23 November 2021

Antibody and vaccination data by UK country and regions in England from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey. This analysis has been produced in partnership with the University of Oxford, the University of Manchester, Public Health England, and Wellcome Trust. This study is jointly led by the ONS and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) working with the University of Oxford and Lighthouse Laboratories to collect and test samples.

[Coronavirus and depression in adults, Great Britain: July to August 2021](#)

Article | Released 1 October 2021

Analysis of the proportion of the adult population of Great Britain experiencing some form of depression in summer 2021, based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. Includes analysis by age, sex and other characteristics and comparisons with early 2021, 2020 and pre-pandemic estimates.

